

Guiding Principles for Development of Washington State's Early Learning System*

1. Be child-focused and family-centered. Promote meaningful partnerships with parents and families, since they are children's first teachers.
2. Promote alignment of early learning services and programs as a continuum that is comprehensive, supports whole child development, and is available to all children.
3. Be flexible, culturally responsive, accessible and respectful, and reflect the needs of local communities and individual children.
4. Be developmentally appropriate and, where applicable, evidence based, and address each stage of child development from prenatal through grade 3.
5. Build on strengths—of children, parents, families, providers, programs, and prior planning efforts, such as Kids Matter and Washington Learns.
6. Promote high-quality early learning to increase school readiness and success in school and in life.
7. Include professional development and support for early learning and care providers.
8. Promote transparency and accountability in all policies, services and programs.
9. Provide ways to measure progress over time.
10. Identify funding sources and promote adequate financing of the system.
11. Provide for meaningful stakeholder review and comment on the Washington State Early Learning Plan as it is being developed and on the system's performance over time.

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* A "system" is a group of independent elements that interact and that together form a unified whole. The early learning system is the various policies, programs and services for young children and for the adults who care for and teach them. When these elements are each working well *and* align with the other elements, children will have the best opportunity for optimal development.